

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

March 4, 2021

1:12 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Chris Tuck, Chair  
Representative Andi Story  
Representative Geran Tarr  
Representative Matt Claman  
Representative George Rauscher  
Representative David Nelson  
Representative Laddie Shaw

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 53

"An Act relating to residency requirements for public school enrollment for certain children of active duty military and National Guard members."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 34

"An Act naming the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots' Memorial Bridge."

- MOVED HB 34 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 53

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY CHILDREN SCHOOL RESIDENCY WAIVER

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) MCCARTY

02/18/21	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
02/18/21	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/18/21	(H)	MLV, EDC
03/04/21	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 34

SHORT TITLE: NAMING VIETNAM HELI. PILOTS' MEM. BRIDGE



SPONSOR(s) : REPRESENTATIVE(s) SHAW

02/18/21	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
02/18/21	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/18/21	(H)	MLV, STA
02/19/21	(H)	FIN REPLACES STA REFERRAL
02/19/21	(H)	BILL REPRINTED
03/02/21	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
03/02/21	(H)	Heard & Held
03/02/21	(H)	MINUTE(MLV)
03/04/21	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

#### **WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE KEN MCCARTY

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HB 53.

DENEEN TUCK, Staff

Representative Ken McCarty

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 53, on behalf of Representative McCarty, prime sponsor.

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Northwest Regional Liaison

Defense-State Liaison Office

U.S. Department of Defense

Olympia, Washington

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 53

DEENA BISHOP, PhD, Superintendent

Anchorage School District

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 53

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

1:12:48 PM

**CHAIR CHRIS TUCK** called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 1:12 p.m. Representatives Story, Shaw, Tarr, Nelson, Rauscher, Tuck were present at the call to order. Representative Claman arrived as the meeting was in progress.



**HB 53-MILITARY CHILDREN SCHOOL RESIDENCY WAIVER**

[1:14:00 PM](#)

CHAIR TUCK announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 53, "An Act relating to residency requirements for public school enrollment for certain children of active-duty military and National Guard members."

[1:14:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KEN MCCARTY, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HB 53. He read the sponsor statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

House Bill 53 seeks to allow military children with residency outside of the state, but with documentation of a pending military relocation to the state, access to preliminary registration, enrollment, or application to a school district at the time that the process is open to the general student population. Proof of residency is temporarily waived until the student begins school. Once the student begins school their parent or guardian has ten (10) days to provide proof of residency in the school district

This is important to military school children, especially those in high school. Often classes are filled during the preliminary registration of the students already registered in that school district. For military students who are high school juniors or seniors, and are transferring to a new school district, they may need to take a specific class to complete their requirements. This bill is also important to those students wishing to attend a Charter School through lottery or otherwise, as these schools often fill up quickly and there are deadlines for entering the lottery.

[1:17:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR asked if there are changes from the last version.

[1:17:56 PM](#)



DENEEN TUCK, Staff, Representative Ken McCarty, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative McCarty, prime sponsor of HB 53, told Representative Tarr that there were no changes from the previous iteration of the proposed legislation.

[1:18:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN asked if this bill passed the House last year.

MS. TUCK answered yes.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN asked for clarification on the "ten-day requirement".

MS. TUCK answered that after a military family arrives in Alaska and decides on a school, the parent(s) have 10 days to submit their paperwork to the school district.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN asked whether, once the family knows they are to relocate to Alaska, they can start making school arrangements at any time.

MS. TUCK replied yes.

[1:19:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR commented that the Alaska Defense Forum took place last year, and the military spouses group brought up related issues with timing of the orders, stress on the family with levels of uncertainty with a new school, and access to the level of services required by a student with special needs.

[1:20:27 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked to get a sense of the scope of the problem.

[1:21:06 PM](#)

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Northwest Regional Liaison, Defense-State Liaison Office, U.S. Department of Defense, expressed support for the policy changes proposed in HB 53. She clarified her position as staff for the Pentagon, working for the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness with the mission to be a resource for addressing quality of life for personnel and families. She stated that passing this



legislation would allow Alaska to join 20 other states in this policy. Approximately 185,000 U.S. military children change schools annually, and they often miss their school registration and other important application dates that happen in the spring, with long-term negative impact that includes necessary shifts in study, summer school, and delayed graduation; allowing families to register for school and arrange classes prior to arrival helps integrate students into the community. The intent of HB 53 is to provide relocating military families access to educational programs and courses at the same time as their in-state counterparts. She noted that this program requires no new systems and would benefit school districts by reducing the discrepancy between projected and actual enrollment. She expressed gratitude to the sponsor of this bill and to Alaska for its support of military families.

[1:24:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER stated that he wonders about the difference between residential and nonresidential college tuition and how this policy change would apply.

CHAIR TUCK said that this bill would affect K-12 public education only.

[1:25:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON asked how military families register their kids for school.

MS. PERREAULT explained that there is a school liaison officer available on each base, who connects relocating families with the proper school and provides on-base/off-base information.

[1:27:31 PM](#)

DEENA BISHOP, PhD, Superintendent, Anchorage School District, testified in support of HB 53. She noted that the municipality of Anchorage and the Anchorage School District (ASD) are honored to serve military families. She said that HB 53 would ensure that a school district considers students to be residents of the district. She described the challenges faced by military families, from getting the initial orders to move, which can be anywhere from six months to 30 days in advance, to finding a home and school in the new city; she also noted that Alaska is considered "overseas" by the military and moving to Alaska comes with its own set of challenges. She further noted that the ASD



currently operates in the manner set forth by the proposed legislation with no problems, but it allows families longer than the ten-day notification.

[1:31:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN asked whether 30 days would be a better time window from Dr. Bishop's perspective.

DR. BISHOP answered that if the goal is to have a similar policy across the United States, then she can understand the benefits; she said that in Anchorage the district provides a window of upwards of 30 days.

[1:32:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY commented that she's pleased to hear that the Anchorage School District is already operating this way and asked how many families are typically affected by the adjustment, and how it impacts the school district's process and budget.

DR. BISHOP answered that a little under 10 percent of the district's students are affected by this program, and that whether or not a child is military, staffing depends on where parents choose to place their children. The district has several different types of schools including language-emergent and charter schools, and their goal is to educate.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY followed up to ask what would change to reassure families that this practice is happening, since Anchorage School District is already doing it.

DR. BISHOP replied that families and parents currently learn of the program simply by calling the school district. This creates a statewide assurance for all military families, not just those moving to Anchorage.

[1:35:15 PM](#)

MS. TUCK clarified for the committee that the 10-day window begins when the student starts in school, not when the family arrives in the state. She stated that she believes there would be no objection to changing the requirement to 30 days.

[1:35:45 PM](#)



REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN said that 30 days is more consistent with many of other things in society. He asked Ms. Perreault if the Pentagon would have a problem with changing the window to 30 days.

MS. PERREAULT answered that the Pentagon doesn't require the change but would have no problem with it. She said that 10 days has been a standard, but there are states with 15 days or more, depending on the flexibility of the school district. She stated again that Alaska is considered an overseas move from the Lower 48, so this would provide an extra cushion because the move is more challenging than moving within the Lower 48.

CHAIR TUCK asked to confirm that the current standard is ten days after arriving, but this proposed legislation would change the standard to 10 days after enrolling.

MS. PERREAULT answered that is her understanding.

[1:37:47 PM](#)

CHAIR TUCK announced that HB 53 would be held over.

**HB 34-NAMING VIETNAM HELI. PILOTS' MEM. BRIDGE**

[1:38:01 PM](#)

CHAIR TUCK announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 34, "An Act naming the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots' Memorial Bridge."

[1:38:18 PM](#)

CHAIR TUCK opened public testimony on HB 34. After ascertaining that there was no one who wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:38:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN noted that when he first came to Alaska in 1980, he met a helicopter pilot named Gordon McDonald, who owned a business in Circle called Sunshine Copters; he had been a pilot in Vietnam and, after all the missions he flew safely in Vietnam, he was ultimately killed by a caved-in roof. Representative Claman expressed that Gordon McDonald was a wonderful person, and any time Vietnam-era helicopter pilots are mentioned he thinks of him.



[1:39:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR moved to report HB 34 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. There being no objection, HB 34 was reported out of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

[1:41:19 PM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 1:41 PM.